

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Sighting of Wedge-tailed Eagles at Guildford—On March 3, 1973 a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles, *Aquila audax*, were sighted roosting on a large Flooded Gum, *Eucalyptus rudis*, in the Helena River near the Woodbridge Hotel at East Street, Guildford.

Again on March 11, 1973 a pair of the birds were seen gliding over the Western edge of the Dalgety Holding paddocks, Bushmead Road, South Guildford. It was assumed that they were the same pair seen on March 3—both birds were under constant "attack" by hordes of crows.

—PETER McMILLAN, Guildford Grammar School.

The Satin Flycatcher—A new record for Western Australia.—An immature female Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyauoleuca*) was collected near Twilight Cove (26 km south of Cocklebidy, W.A.) at 0930 hours on 12 April, 1973. The bird was feeding in myoporum scrub along the base of cliffs. Its plumage and measurements (see Table 1) were similar to specimens of juvenile Satin Flycatchers collected on King Island in Bass Strait. This species normally occurs in eastern Australia from Cape York to Tasmania but has been recorded as a vagrant once in South Australia (at Langhorne Creek, south-east of Adelaide) on 29 March, 1964 (Condon, *S.A. Orn.*, 24, 1965: 73) and once in New Zealand on 12 June, 1963 (Blackburn, *Notornis*, 10, 1963: 262).

I would like to thank Mr Ian Mason (CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research, Darwin) for preparing the skin, Mr R. H. Green (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston) for lending reference specimens and Dr Glen Storr (W.A. Museum, Perth) for checking the identification.

Table 1.—Dimensions of immature Satin Flycatchers (mm)

Museum No.	Sex	Where collected	Wing	Tail	Total bill	Exposed bill
A 12648	♀	Twilight Cove	84.5	83.0	18.0	11.0
1968/2/104	♀	King I.	82.0	79.0	18.0	12.0
1968/2/148	♂	King I.	87.0	83.5	20.0	13.0

—M. G. BROOKER, Gooseberry Hill.

Distraction Display of *Peltohyas*—Maelcan (*Emu*, 93, 1973: 61-70) states that "No writings on *Peltohyas* mention any kind of distraction behaviour by adult birds with eggs".

Australian Dotterels (*Peltohyas australis*) are not uncommon at Gibb Rock, 290 km E by S of Perth, where the following observations were made.

While ploughing on 21 February 1970, my son, Malcolm, observed an Australian Dotterel performing a distraction display. He located a nest containing one egg. Though he ploughed round it, later observation indicated that from that time the nest was deserted. We thought it likely that the egg represented an incomplete clutch, but it is possible that it was one which had failed to hatch and that chicks were in the vicinity. No such objection seems to apply to the following observations.

On May 11, 1973, my son, while ploughing a stubble paddock, disturbed a bird from a nest containing three eggs. The bird performed a distraction display. The following day we inspected the nest together, finding two eggs and one newly-hatched chick. The adults were present, but on this occasion there was no display.

Again on 4 June 1973 a similar incident occurred. The bird left the nest and performed a distraction display. In this instance the eggs were two-thirds covered with soil when first seen, but were uncovered when

the next round of the paddock had been made. This is the only case that we have observed of egg covering.

My son has found other nests with eggs when adults have left but has witnessed a display only on the three occasions described above.

I have seen the distraction display twice, but in neither case could I locate eggs or chicks. The bird moves with wings and tail spread close to the ground. In this posture the white undertail coverts are rather conspicuous.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK. Harvey.

Territorial Confrontation between Two Species of Whistlers (*Pachycephala*)—During the visit of the W.A. Group of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union to Busselton in October 1973, members witnessed an unusual confrontation between individuals of two different species of whistlers. Territorial challenges are usually intra-specific, and it is of interest to record the reactions between two allied species whose songs, though having a certain resemblance, are sufficiently distinct even to an untrained human ear.

On October 8, near the mouth of the Abba River, in open forest land interspersed with thickets, a male Golden Whistler (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) was seen whistling a strong territorial challenge. There was a prompt response by a male Rufous Whistler (*P. rufiventris*) some chains away. The two birds repeated their challenges, drawing closer, and growing more excited as they approached each other, taking up perches and whistling at each stand, until the Rufous Whistler in great agitation took up his station in a large tuart tree, while the Golden Whistler was challenging in an adjacent tree. One more challenge and move by either would have brought them to the tense beak-to-beak encounter which is sometimes seen with Rufous Whistlers. In these moments the rivals, in their emotion, may forget briefly to fly and will fall almost to the ground. However in the present instance, at this point, the Golden Whistler drew away. The withdrawal was not precipitate—more in line with an acceptance of definition of boundaries. It could still be a claimant for land and dispute the Rufous if he dared step beyond that tuart.

These two species, so alike in many ways, are not commonly found together because they usually prefer different habitats. There is an overlap near the site of the Naturalists' Club's proposed field station at Culeenup Island, Yundurup, where a more detailed study of this interesting behaviour might be made.

Three interesting speculations arise:

1. Do these two species as a general rule recognise and respond to each other's challenges, or was this an isolated individual aberration?

2. If they do challenge each other consistently what is the effect on the breeding of the rival birds—especially as the initial stages of courtship (at least in young birds) often begins like a territorial display? This might result in a no-man's-land of ineffective breeding between the local ranges of the two species, and perhaps help to define them.

3. In this Abba River confrontation it was the Golden Whistler which yielded. Perhaps it is the nature of the particular local environment which decides the issue. In relatively open country the Rufous Whistler may be expected to obtain the mastery; but perhaps in more densely-wooded environments that species will have less confidence and the Golden Whistler will triumph.

—RICA ERICKSON, Nedlands.

Fish Attacks Man.—While walking in knee deep water on the reef that surrounds Adele Island, near Derby, a shell collector, Mr. I. Prince, and his companion were, in his own words, "viciously attacked by a ferocious looking fish". The fish was first observed lying between two rocks but as they approached closer it sprang out at them snapping at their ankles. Mr. Prince attempted to move away from the fish's ap-